A MESSAGE TO THE MIDDLE CLASS

SEYMOUR DEMING

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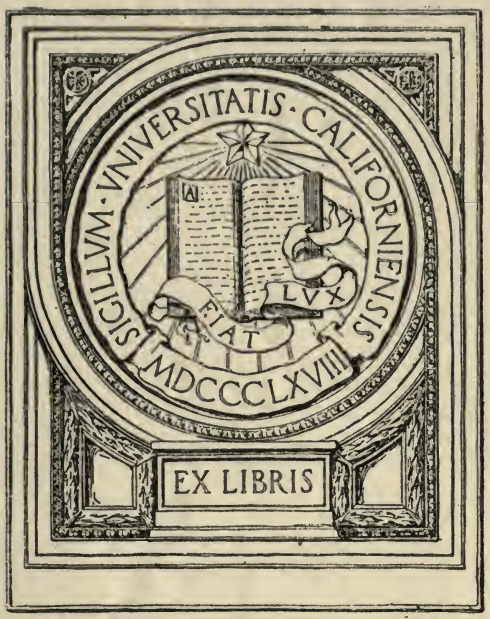
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BY
SEYMOUR DEMING

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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WHENCE IT CAME

THESE are the things which thousands of people are thinking. The only novelty is that here they are thought out loud. The pages which follow are not rummaged out of books: they are written out of the every day lives of every day people. They are the "pay dirt," extracted from numberless encounters with unnumbered men and women, —in work shops, on steamers, at restaurant tables, in farm houses, at strike headquarters, in railway trains, across store counters, on the curbstone at noon hours, in hotel lobbies,—wherever the great human family warms itself at a common hearth.

So the writer is not to be considered the author. For this testimony was collected and interpreted from innumerable lips. He who delivers it, himself an atom in the great crowd, is only the spokesman of an ideal which is becoming the common hope of multitudes.

Finally. This is an appeal to a class. But that does not make it a class appeal.

A MESSAGE TO THE MIDDLE CLASS

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

A MESSAGE TO THE MIDDLE CLASS

THE housemaid of a college president had been offered a situation in the family of a New York millionaire. As the wage proposed to her would have denuded the academic cupboard, she was asked by the president—a shade respectfully—whether she intended to accept. "No," replied the girl primly, "I think I prefer to remain in a middle class family."

Let the reader hesitate, therefore, before deciding hastily that he is too wise or too foolish, too rich or too poor, to be within bow-shot of the housemaid's innocently poisoned arrow. For to be described as belonging to the American middle class to-day is something between

a compliment and an insult. To disentangle the one from the other, let me invite you first to give ear to a parable which has the added virtue of having been snapshotted as it was happening.

I

THE PARABLE

TWELFTH week of the strike in Elmport. It began in April. Until June, the strikers had managed to avoid that response to the incitements of a mill-subservient constabulary which a nation, suckled in the creed that the natural rights of man are the common-law rights of 18th-century Englishmen, reproachfully terms "disorder." Then befell the riot. A woman was killed outright by a revolver shot fired, some say by the police, some say by the strikers. Ten people, mostly mill operatives, were carried to the hospital with cracked sconces or bullet wounds.

Nineteen strikers were thrown into jail on charges of riot or murder. Parades were forbidden. The Poles were denied the use of their own society hall for strike meetings; and the town invoked an ordinance aimed at freedom of speech and public assemblage. A sympathetic clergyman offered his churchyard as a meeting place. The town government retaliated with another ordinance, to prohibit any meeting on property abutting on a public highway,—this, somewhat on the principle of the French Assembly which decreed that no deputy should be a crown minister. "Say rather, gentleman," replied that statesman sarcastically, "no deputy named *Mirabeau!*" . . . From the flat-topped tombstone of a soldier of the American Revolution, a strike-leader, haranguing his fellows, was dragged to arrest. The town later voted $12,000 for special police. These reserves, by an amazing blunder in tact, were recruited in part from the police of Lawrence,—

the worst-hated by mill-workers of any constabulary in New England.

The theater of this bitter warfare with its threatenings and slaughter is a sweet, gracious port town, once a fishing village, quaintly nestled among great, dome-like glacial hills and majestic sweeps of salt marsh washed by a sounding surf among sand dunes.

The Three Elmports

There are three towns in Elmport. One is a winding of elm-arched streets among the ample, gambrel-roofed homesteads of two centuries ago. Wide chimneys and peaked dormers shoulder among the boughs of sleek maples, shapely elms and ancient oaks. Burnished colonial brasses gleam in the sunshine on front doors. Gardens, behind white picket fences and hedges of box, are gay with old-fashioned flowers. In the cool, dim parlors of these stately houses, amid ancestral mahoganies, dwell the children of the old settlers

who keep the stores of the town (which are maintained by the wages of the operatives) or go to their daily tasks in the city, or live on the incomes of their investments (including stock in these strike-fettered mills).

Across a stone bridge of pre-revolutionary date under the gaunt walls of the mill buildings lies the second Elmport,—the new. Its streets shimmer in the blistering glare of sun on shadeless asphalt and brick walls. Its dooryards are grassless; its wooden tenements stand bleak in winter, sweltering in summer. Here are no crimson rambler roses to sound their note of color against greenery; here is only hard-eyed poverty intensified by the grim battle of strike time when wages have stopped and expenses are going on. Against the old Elmport of farmers and sea captains is set the new,—a mill population of alien birth. These two are working out their destinies.

But aloof, on the eminences com-

manding views of the open downs and the illimitable sea horizon, are the villas of the rich,—the third Elmport. So the three great classes are represented here: the rich, indifferent; the middle class, bewildered; the poor, in revolt.

Flagolatry

When the trouble at Lawrence the year previous was ended, it was evident that something must be done to revindicate before the country the repute of that city. Not that Lawrence was worse governed than many another America city, but that the strike, applying the acid test to the efficacy of our institutions, revealed their defects in the worst possible light. Was there, then, a conscientious effort to remedy the conditions which had produced the strike? There was not. . . . But a wealthy citizen, dying, left $5,000 to build a memorial flag pole. Instead of removing the causes which created the protest of the foreign laborers in

the mills, your sole idea was to rebuke the protest. This was the reply of the middle class. You substituted the symbol for the thing.

In Elmport it was the same. "As a rebuke to the methods of the I. W. W." and "to vindicate the loyalty of the town to our national institutions," Elmport resolved . . . to arbitrate the strike? No. The half-hearted attempt at this was a failure because the mill management denied that there was "anything to arbitrate." To mitigate the discontent by scouring up the reeking tenements? No. A militant young clergyman had proposed this, to be promptly checked in his generous enthusiasm by the revelation that the rents from these tenements were sustaining his own parishioners, certain of whom, when he tried to jam through a housing ordinance in spite of them, fought him tooth-and-nail and defeated the ordinance. No. To vindicate its reputation and prove its loyalty, Elmport re-

solved . . . to have a Fourth of July parade.

This was the answer of our old American middle class—the people who won our independence and freed the chattel-slaves—to the wage-slave rebellion. They would bandage a poisoned wound with the national colors.

So Elmport was gay with flags. The July sun drenched yellow gold on the tall elms, the smooth lawns, the venerable houses. Bands crashed. The parade flowed past. Ten burly policemen in single rank; tall-hatted town dignitaries on horseback; Grand Army veterans in blue and their wives in white; Boy Scouts in their pretty uniform of brown khaki; business men carrying an enormous flag blanket-fashion (a hint to cartoonists of the kept press) as if to toss the I. W. W. leaders as raw recruits are tossed in the army; a boy and two men impersonating son, sire and grandsire, after Willard's painting of the "Spirit of '76" that hangs under the

town hall tower which, a few miles farther down the coast, sits, like a horseman, bestriding the promontory of the ancient town of Marblehead; and brass bands variously discoursing My Old Kentucky Home, Everybody's Doing It, Harvard football songs, and other national anthems, at march time —this was the rebuke administered by the middle class to syndicalism.

Syndicalism, meanwhile, was sweating in the little back room of a Polish coffee house, busily folding circulars to be mailed to the radical press of the country.

Elmporting

In the white-paneled parlor of one of those colonial houses which the architect Inigo Jones need not have been ashamed to acknowledge, among the marble-topped tables and Sheraton chairs of the old order, a Protestant minister is trying to formulate an answer to the question: "What shall Elmport do about

it?"—a question equivalent to "What shall the Anglo-Saxon American middle class do about it?" And this is his answer:

> "If the Constitution of the United States did not forbid us to imprison men for their political beliefs, we ought to clap these I. W. W. leaders into jail and keep them there."

Waiving the circumstance that this had already been done, the questioner interposes mildly, with a motion toward the parade which is passing the windows of the parsonage, "But isn't your celebration to-day in honor of a struggle to put an end to just that kind of procedure?"

> "Perhaps," says the minister, "but all the same, we shall have to come back to it."

What he could not see was that in his resentment and impatience, he was repudiating the principles for which his

townsmen were theoretically honoring the "patriot dead" celebrated on the granite monument in the middle of the town green in front of his house—to say nothing of the principles which had made him a parson instead of a priest. He and his townsmen were honoring the symbol and ignoring the thing. "Mouth honor, breath." Let the old issue appear in a new guise, and that new guise was, to them, a disguise.

A fortnight earlier, the town of Lexington, now a comfortable, middle-class suburb where there are no very rich and no very poor, was celebrating its 200th anniversary. The press of the following day duly recorded that the speakers "excoriated" the I. W. W. Now while it is possible to look on the I. W. W. without unqualified approval, it is also possible to understand its syndicalism as the symptom of a disease. Lexington was denouncing the symptom under the impression that this was to eradicate the disease. That the "Spirit of '76"

which it had commemorated with a gallant bronze statue by Mr. Kitson on the town common, is once more in our midst in the form of a labor revolt had not even remotely occurred to these ancestor-worshipers. They were Elmporting.

Patriotism—Union Down

Certain enterprising students of history (who have suspected that there are some aspects which fail to get themselves written in books which publishers can afford to print) have made the enlightening discovery that the abolitionists in the '50's were saying things about the flag much more revolting to people whose loyalty was more implicit than discriminating than anything yet uttered by our Ettors and our Haywoods. They, too, were hated, feared and "excoriated." They, too, were upbraided for assailing our "national institutions" (among which was the institution of chattel slavery) by people whose inten-

tions were the best, whose business transactions were at least commercially honest, whose private morals were unimpeachable, and whose only error was the somewhat serious one of having got their patriotism wrong-side-up-with-care. A ship in distress sets her colors fluttering in the rigging in the reverse position. Let a middle class reflect that it is quite humanly possible to steer a ship of state into distress by too persistently honoring the flag—union down.

At the close of that blazing, sultry day, from a rostrum festooned with bunting and wilted maple boughs, the Congressman of the district harangued the multitude on the town green. On one side of him was an historic meeting house; on the other, the granite shaft "to our patriot dead." Low in the west flamed the sunset of a scorching evening in July. The leaves hung limp in the lifeless air. The orator, perspiring in his starched linen and his conventional coat of black broadcloth, was ponder-

ously brandishing his arms and intoning that monotonous sing-song which, with us, passes for parliamentary eloquence. Those of his audience acute enough to understand the pedagogue severity of his gingerly allusions to "lawless apostles of revolt, on the one hand," and "the neglected duties of citizenship, on the other," received it as a scolding meant for somebody else. The rest, jaded and uncomprehending, listened in a stupid apathy. They had not the remotest idea what he meant. And no wonder. For the circumstances of his position were such that the only safe course for him was to mean nothing. The bee in the politician's bonnet must be all honey and no sting. For him to handle the stinging insects of truth is to court defeat for reëlection by incensing all parties. So the Congressman's discourse was simply "On the one hand. . . . And, on the other." The hot, red sunlight streamed in rays level from the west, flushing the white walls of the

houses to rose pink, bronzing the dusty foliage, and, all ominously, splashing the windows with stains as of spattered blood.

Such is the succor you may expect from your politicians.

At Gettysburg, on the same day that Elmport was parading, the great American middle class held an anniversary observance which was full of heartache. Did it occur to any of them that had the nation listened to the voice of its conscience in the abolitionists of the thirties and forties, there might have been a way to avoid the tempest of death that swept that field of horror? Did it occur to them that for the want of that ear to hear they paid, as poor, heartsick Garrison said they would pay, in their blood, in their tears, and in the precious lives of their loved young men? Does it occur to their children, the American middle class of to-day, that we stand once more in the '50's, with the voices

of the slavery abolitionists crying in the wilderness, and another Gettysburg ahead?

II

THE MESSAGE

DEAR friends, let me beg you to hear me patiently. Let me beg you, most of all, to believe that I am not saying what I shall say for the fun of the thing. I had rather some one else said these things and said them better than I can; but I have waited for that some one to speak until I can wait no longer, for the time is growing short. You must let me do it as best I can, and make allowances for my bluntness, not for my sake but for your own; for there is no longer time to beat around the bush. And remember this: everything I shall say hurts my pride as much as it hurts yours,—or would, if I had not begun to see that in an hour like this, pride is a sorry guest. I, too, supposed that we were

already doing all that could be expected of us, only to find that we had shamefully betrayed our trust. And it stabbed me as shrewdly as it will stab you, if your consciences are what I think they are. For I am one of you. Your children have been my playmates, and your young men have been my loyal friends. I have buried my beloved dead with you, and with you I ask no greater honor than to be thought worthy to lie down to sleep when my work is done. I speak as a friend to friends, so let it be with the frankness which is the privilege of friendship.

"Ill Fares the Land"

Is it possible that you do not realize the jeopardy of your position? If your diplomats, under the flimsy pretext of national honor, are beguiled by wily financiers into a war for the pawing of investment chestnuts out of a foreign fire, you are the ones who must do their fighting. And pay the taxes after-

wards. If there is a panic, you pay the bills. Let there come an internal revolution, and you are the ones who (unless you have the wit to see that your cause is one with the revolutionists') will be called out to "put it down." You are, and you always have been—all honor to you for it—the burden-bearers. And in your ignorance you are needlessly making them heavier.

Heavier they will be, too, before they are lighter. The store which once kept your family in comfort is being elbowed by price manipulation, restricted credit, and favoritism to the chains of big establishments. Your snug practice, legal or medical, is challenged by the hordes of fledgling professionals crowded out of the academic nest each June by the popular delusion that a laity can support a swarm of practitioners on its bodies, and estates by whom it is well-nigh outnumbered. The frontier has vanished. To "go west" to-day is to exchange a battlefield where you can

fight among friends for a battlefield exactly like it except that you must fight among strangers. The schooling which once equipped your children for their grapple with life now delivers them over to the mercy of any employer whom the fierce necessities of competition force to coin their youth and their ambition into his narrow margins of profit. Your reddest blood is steadily draining into the cities. There, if it escapes defilement, it is thinned by artificial standards of living which are fast reducing wives and children to the position of luxuries for the few. Your children in the cities marry late, if at all; and the children they think they can afford to have are half the number they would normally desire.

Meanwhile, the manufacturers are bracing open the gates to Southern European immigration, partly because it is cheaper to produce their wares by low-priced human machines than by high-priced patented machines—in many

cases already invented but uninstalled until an alarmed middle class, scenting the danger, shuts off the supply; and partly in terror of the truth; that once this influx ceases, the now-fluid racial and class alignments will solidify and gripe our national vitals with a class struggle within a generation. Rather than face the gale and live it out, they are willing to run before it at the cost of shattering the vessel on a lee shore.

The competitive tide of this lower standard of living is pitilessly creeping up your own shins. You feel the chill; mock yourselves with the vain assurance that it will crawl no higher; and protest desperately against a thing known to you as the high cost of living. And you lend a credulous ear to any politician with contempt enough for your intelligence to assure you that it can be mended by tariff revision, currency reform, restriction of immigration, control of trusts, or any or all of these, including an underdone hash of eco-

nomic compromises styled Progressivism.

Dancing on the Crust

Now it happens that the procession is already moving at a rate which leaves none too much time for a middle class to put itself at the head of it. Those who were complaining six years ago that it was moving at glacier speed are now complaining that it is moving like an avalanche. For every great revolution is preceded by a period of unrest which generates its own momentum. The symptoms of these birth throes are always the same: challenge of betrayed stewardships, and a pitching of traditions into the dust-bin. Cromwell was a child of revolution, not a father: the skeptic philosophers had leveled the Bastille years before "wine-merchant Cholat turned impromptu cannoneer"; an academic discussion of the rights of man primed those muskets at Lexington; yet in this hour which makes the

most supreme demand on your patriotism since those decades of anti-slavery agitation which kindled the fires of the sixties, you are braying yourselves hoarse over professional baseball.

It is cold comfort to be told by scholars that

> . . . the middle class defied the Pope in the 15th century, and won the greatest revolution in history. It cut off the head of Charles I in 1649, and of Louis XVI in 1793. It won the American war of independence. Finally, only a generation ago, it fought the Civil War . . .

for this may merely mean that disputes which might have been settled by your brains had to be settled by your blood; that an alert social conscience might have avoided that ghastly river of slaughter through which we have always been wading to justice and to "peace." But even if no watching and

working and praying in 1850 could have averted that crushing sacrifice of strong and beautiful young men, is it so certain that the wage slavery of 1915 is a responsibility less freighted with tragic possibilities? It is fifty years since Lord Macaulay wrote:

> ". . . your republic will be as fearfully plundered and laid waste by barbarians in the 20th century as the Roman Empire was in the 5th; with this difference, that the Huns and Vandals who ravaged the Roman empire came from without, and that your Huns and Vandals will have been engendered within your own country and by your own institutions."

Nor should this be construed to impugn the character and good intentions of our recent immigrants. For whatsoever vandalism they may engender, we shall have the neglect and oppression of them, permitted by us under our own

government in our own mill cities, to thank. It is twenty years since William Clarke concurred:

> Had you predicted to a Roman senator that the splendid Græco-Roman cities would be given to the flames and that the Roman senate and legions would be trampled down by hordes of ignorant barbarians, he would have smiled, offered you another cup of Falernian wine, and changed the subject. . . . But there are no barbarians? . . . They are in our midst.

Who that has seen the streets of a city in strike-time beleaguered by militia and patrolled like an armed camp can rid his brain of that pestering image of society as the fool dancing on the crust? Also, it is one of history's axioms that the social order which conceives change at least likely is the most liable to change.

Pulling Down the Shade

The poor know what they want. The rich know what they do not want. *You* —hardly know that a dispute is going on. For while the poor, in the stress of a desperate strike, can rise to an incredible pitch of heroism for what they regard as a principle, and while the rich, stung by conscience, will do what they can under the circumstances of their false position, you have never even dreamed of the abysmal unimportance of practically everything that is thought about and talked about in the middle class society to which you belong.

I know: it is not so long since you pulled your own feet out of that deadly mire of poverty. There it lurks, still: too close for comfort. The day's routine fags you body and soul. You come home, as I do, or as anybody does, with a furrow between your eyebrows, asking nothing but to be allowed to forget for a few hours. But,—by the Eternal,

brother!—I say to you that the way to escape your troubles is not to forget, but to consider the troubles of the other fellow.

You who live in the small towns and in the country,—yes, even you of the city suburbs, reply: "How can we be expected to understand these things? We cannot understand what we do not see."

From the windows of a train rolling through the steel mill district of a Great Lakes port, you look on gaunt chimneys belching flame, a smoke-stained heaven, and befouled tenements where the workers snatch their brief rest before hurrying back to the inferno which burns their lives away. The man in the seat ahead pulled down his window shade. On an impulse, he was asked, "Why did you pull down your shade?" "To shut out that dreadful sight," said he, quite simply; "it is too horrible to think of." "Too horrible for you to think of; yet not too horrible for some

one else to live in?" "But what can a man like me do?"

You can stop pulling down the shade.

Hostages to Misfortune

Let no one suppose that I have overlooked the tether which reduces our liberty to an ignoble flop as far as the string's end. You may be convinced that the only hope of our civilization lies in uprooting these weeds of capitalism, yet your livelihoods depend (or you think they depend) on the stability of the present order. Ignoring the obvious fact that the stability of the present order is not stable, your position is this: You are the wheat. Pull up the tares and much of the wheat comes too. Rather than risk being that part of the wheat which comes up with the tares, you are willing to risk the ruin of the whole crop. Your compassion for the oppressed may be genuine and deep. But faced with the choice of your ideals or your bread-and-butter, most of you

will plump for your bread-and-butter. Not because you are selfish and cowardly, but because, if you rebel, the social system which you attack will at once retaliate with the unspeakable malice of bringing down the club of poverty on the backs of your wives and babies. It has contrived that a martyrdom you would cheerfully accept for yourself you will shrink from imposing on those dearer to you than yourself. But did it ever occur to you that if you rejected this compromise, the spectacle of your martyrdom would, as it has always done, shame society into making terms with you? It is no more than the poor are doing in strike-time now: no more than has been done by the women of England. Why wait until forced to it, perhaps too late, by the sharp urge of necessity? "When a Man comes, there comes Revolution." Your own Emerson proclaimed this law. And the suffering which is voluntarily embraced is robbed of half its bitterness.

The utmost that can be expected is, probably, that you will try to understand and sympathize with the few men and women generous enough and brave enough to renounce self and undertake this warfare single-handedly: that you will, at least, forbear to persecute them for striving to do the work which ought to have been done by you. The law, able to move only as fast as public opinion, is necessarily always one step behind that. The clergy can scarcely move faster than their congregations . . . and so on. The true leaders are so far ahead of their time as to be universally considered upsetters of society by the very people whose only hope lies in the triumph of the cause they so frantically resist. Thus it is of supreme importance that these revolutionary voices should be protected from being stifled by middle class timidity: for on these dauntless pioneers of the new frontier hang all our futures. They are willing to suffer. Are you enough

enlightened to be willing to let them suffer in such a way that you may profit by it? Will you be saved from yourselves? Will you let their feet endure fiery torments while they are carrying you out of a burning building without giving them buffets in resentment of the intimacy of such personal contact?

Here and there will be,—is,—a man or a woman with the pluck to jeopardize livelihood and family in the struggle to expose and thwart this vast economic imposture which, unless exposed and thwarted, must eventually make drudges and cowards of us all. With Luther, they are worthy to sing:

> Let goods and kindred go,
> This mortal life also;
> The body they may kill,
> God's truth endureth still.

But even if we lack the strength to give up all and follow him, literally, in the only "way" the carpenter of Nazareth ever meant, there is still a very real and

very practical manner in which we can help.

The Aristocracy of the Obscure

Few of us are lucky enough to be doing the work we like. Most of us are doing the thing we must, for a living. This drudgery we can sweeten in two ways: We can use our scant leisure for some ideal and unselfish end; or we can do our irksome day-labor twice as well as is expected of us. Most of us, for the want of a great cause to which we can dedicate our brief and precious leisure, choose the latter way: and if you ask me why men easily to be recognized as naturally great,—strong souls of whom it is commonly said that they could have governed a state or led an army,—are so frequently to be found in obscure posts; if you ask me why, in spite of these demon hordes of hideous injustices, the world moves, on the whole, as smoothly as it seems to, you have yet to learn that it is because countless multi-

tudes of the unnumbered and the unsung are discharging their distasteful duties with a faithfulness which it is an insult to the divinity of human nature to suppose can ever be paid for. You have yet to learn, in short, that these obscure heroes—half sinners, half saints—are your own splendid selves. That you, the "average men," are more important to society than the "great men" of song and story is a truth which has always been revealed to the greatest of these great men, and they are humbled by that knowledge to esteem themselves less than the least. Indeed, the depth of their sense of this is the true measure of their greatness.

This voluntary faithfulness, your contribution over and above what you are paid for, is the universal *credit system,* which alone makes it possible for the world to do business.

When, therefore, the syndicalists propose to repudiate this trust,—to let the machinery wreck itself simply by with-

holding this margin of service for which no pay has ever been expected or asked—to shatter society not by the things the workers do, but by the things they cannot be quarreled with for leaving undone, do not condemn the syndicalist for his doctrine of *sabotage,* created, as it has been, by the grim law of self-defense, but condemn with all your vehemence the scheme of society whereby employers are obliged to impose such conditions on their men that these, to protect themselves, must repudiate the most sacred thing in human life—the voluntary acceptance of a trust.

When a system has begun to kill the instinctive idealism of the human race, that system must go, or the race will go. In a time when any workman knows that every ounce of superior ability on his part must be concealed from an employer lest it be seized to weld one more shackle on his fellow workmen, the reproach against trade unionism that it

has lowered the standard of workmanship is a reproach which, like the egg, may have been good once. Those who complain that radicalism crumbles the integrity of the working class should, for their own sakes, look where that accusation leaves them. Capitalism has begun to destroy the *morale* on which alone it existed. The Serpent is seen in its old act of stinging itself to death.

Now this vast, silent Credit System, though it is a virtue not confined to any one class, but is a dignity of the whole human race, has always been one of the noblest traits of a middle class. You *are* honest. You *are* faithful. You *do* keep the laws, as nearly as the laws will let you. And you may suspect, with strong grounds for your suspicion, that this is the real balance of power, the real driving force in any government, the which, if it have this force behind it, can weather any tempest, but which, if it has abused the trust and alienated the force, must perish. The hitch just now

is that this power is not hooked-up to drive anything. It is spending itself in trivial personal issues. It is directing nothing except your private lives. Your private lives are often very clean, very generous, and very beautiful; but their cleanliness, their generosity and their beauty will not save society: will not save even yourselves. Many a clear-souled gentleman and gentlewoman rode in the tumbrils to the guillotine's icy kiss, wondering, all the way, what their offense had been.

This silent energy, therefore, which is now wasting itself in the personal ends sanctioned by the individualism of the 19th century must be harnessed for public work. And I am not fussy how. Once you have digested the facts, I am willing to believe that you will be the best judges of what to do.

"And so to Prayers Again"

But do not suppose that your consciences can make reliable steersmen un-

til your consciences are instructed. Mere good intentions will not suffice. That disastrous courses are steered by conventionally "good" men is the most persistent and deadly risk in human affairs. Evil is easy enough to recognize when it appears in a bad man. For that very reason it generally chooses to disguise itself in an otherwise good man whose goodness lends so much the more ruinous authority to his acts. The tragedy of the Pharisees was not that they were bad. The tragedy of the Pharisees was that they firmly believed themselves to be good. And do not be offended when I say that a most striking parallel of history is the parallel between the Pharisees and the respectable classes in any age—between the Pharisees and yourselves, to be exact.

You are conscientious enough. (So were they.) But your consciences are the wrong variety—personal-religious consciences, worried about the salvation of your own souls, which can never get

saved until you get a new conscience which will sit up nights worrying about the bodies of your wretched fellow men which must be saved before there can be any talk of saving the souls they house. The brabbles of these last six years have at least proved that society is in a predicament where the private conscience of the individual, which served well enough for half a generation ago, cannot undertake duties which must be discharged by a public conscience of the community which is yet to be created. In Elmport, where there was religious conscience enough to float off a revival in sinners' tears, there was not enough social conscience to wet an eyelash. In issues as to which the one thing certain is that they are not personal, this old-fashioned conscience sees nothing but personal issues. It imagines that to avert revolution the one thing needful is to sit on the safety-valve. To ease an acute crisis, it will cheerfully abrogate every civil right

which Anglo-Saxons have struggled for since the Magna Charta was wrested from slippery King John, all in the serene supposition that it is "master of the situation." Ministers, in moments of candor, have confessed their distress at having to recognize that parishioners who conform to every traditional test of righteousness, "people you can't help loving," stand nevertheless in some public relation to the community in which they are not only obstructionary but actively mischievous. No amount of willingness to do the right thing will get the right thing done so long as the huge mass of these well-intentioned people is conscientiously bent on the *wrong* thing. You must first chew up the facts very fine—a tough mouthful; and you must next digest them well: it will need a strong stomach.

"Yes, but His Fine Personal Character . . ."

You protest that the gentlemen who,

to preserve incomes of five figures, persist in steering us into these deadly perils, are good husbands and kind fathers. I am forced to remind you that the political refugees in the Plymouth Colony, to whom you owe whatsoever free institutions have been spared to you by the monarchical form of 19th-century industrialism, warmly applauded their English brethren for beheading a monarch on whose behalf a large slice of horrified middle class—your own prototypes—urged that identical plea. If a Stuart king's was an acute case requiring a desperate remedy, what assurance have we that a powerful monarch, who had achieved the wedlock of the domestic virtues and the public vices, was any more threatening to the common weal in the seventeenth century than a powerful owning (and therefore governing) class which has achieved the union of personal irreproachability and industrial tyranny in the twentieth? So shrewdly has this

dual standard been thrust home to us that we are daily outfaced by the spectacle of men whose "fine personal characters" we would all but gladly barter for a man who, though he might be a knave in his private life, would yet shape his public life to some sense of social decency . . . and those who ask why corrupt politicians are continually elected and make, on the whole, fairly acceptable administrators, are directed to reperuse the first half of this sentence.

To particularize: a venerable physician, chairman of the board of health, had been, in the days when registration of contagious disease was a new idea, a valuable officer. In an age of preventive medicine he is an anachronism. But his sole income is his salary. As a good husband and kind father, his duty to his family forbids him to resign. His tenure of office postpones sanitary and housing reforms for the want of

which scores of babies are, as a matter of record, annually dying. This innocent slaughterer of innocents would be outraged at a charge of murder. Yet as between this good husband and kind father of unimpeachably "fine personal character," and an officer of possibly loose morals who would scientifically attack infant mortality, could any sane public policy pause an instant to choose?

Dies Iræ

I do not say that the domestic virtues on which a middle class in every age has justly prided itself are the less important (though I can see on every hand situations in which they are wholly irrelevant, not to say inadequate): what I do say is that they are not enough. And my protest rebounds from a besotted self-esteem (not incompatible with countenancing wages which drive women to the streets while practicing the domestic virtue of monogamy it-

self) which insistently shrieks that they *are* enough. Which has led an eminent sociologist to declare that we are in a situation where

> The judgment of the conventionally "good" citizen may be unwittingly as evil as that of the worst criminal.

What is more, the head-in-sand policy now in force is the very worst preparation for, as well as the surest guarantee of a day of wrath to come. Your militia would not save you, not even if they mowed down strikers with Gatling guns, as they have done. Nor need you look to be rescued by your rich relations. And since you are the ones who must settle this muddle, if you are to save your institutions and your ideals, to say nothing of yourselves, why not be about it? Grow a new species of social responsibility on the healthy old stalk of your personal characters. For if we

cannot shoulder new duties, life has a way of jostling us aside to make room for those who can.

But if your ignorance is more perilous to society than the righteous discontent of an idealistic working class, you have at least the excuse that the machinery which, if it is to go on, must keep you in the dark, has well-nigh perfected a process whereby you are automatically misinformed, or not informed at all. I use these impersonal terms to describe it because it is not, as syndicalists and other radicals believe, the conscious invention of knaves. That were too sweet a flattery. It grew. It was the line of least resistance. It was nourished by a cowards' truce which offered every reward for compromise and every penalty for telling the truth. Thus it is that you are the victims of a vast social conspiracy of silence quite as universal and far more effective than the conspiracy of silence which you de-

lude yourselves into believing has concealed the facts of sex from your children. This conspiracy is involuntary. The minister who declares that he has always felt free to utter anything from his pulpit which he felt impelled to say has simply never been impelled to say anything which he did not feel free to utter.

False (Weather) Prophets

You would not expect the ticket-seller at a baseball field to volunteer the private information to the crowd at his window that a thunder storm was coming, even if he knew, and had it on the authority of the weather bureau. In the first place, as the manager would point out as he kicked him off the field, the weather bureau might be wrong—as well it might. Besides, both ticket-seller and manager might, in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, be able to persuade themselves that the storm would blow over. Do not sup-

pose, therefore, that it will be easy to obtain the kind of information you need from the three great organs of public instruction,—the colleges, the churches and the newspapers. They are only vaguely aware that anything is afoot, and what they do know they call by false names, in the desperate superstition that the sun of that red dawn can be cheated out of rising by a common agreement to call it the moon. And do not be deceived by their vehement denials into believing that these charges are untrue in the main because they can, here and there, by the case-system of "I-know-of-an-instance" disprove them in one or two particulars. For they are the ticket-sellers, and their every mental process is so colored by subserviency to a class view of affairs that to ask them to see these matters in their true relations is to ask a man looking through a red glass to see green. They are honestly not aware of any constraint on their tongues,—which is quite the most

hopeless part of it. A convenient formula for this fact is that *people are not cussed: they are only blind.*

Our Churchianity

When I speak of the churches, I speak not of the clergymen but of their congregations,—of you, to be explicit. In a time when prophets and righteous men have divined that rich and poor, scholar and deck-hand, we are all lost or all saved together, and that the surest path to salvation is to forget that you have a soul in making the lot of your fellow man such that he can seek salvation,—by the same path,—your doctrine is still insisting that the all-important is to save your own souls. That we must all succeed or all fail together; that the boulevard is never safe until the slum is safe; that "an injury to one is an injury to all" is a new kind of gospel which you have hitherto supposed applied only to the party necessarily in the wrong of industrial squabbles, never

guessing that it may be a perfectly obvious first axiom of our social order in which we are all so indissolubly knit together that a wound in any part bleeds the whole.

The ministers, poor fellows, are bursting with this message, if you would only untie the gag. To their everlasting honor be it acknowledged that they are, as it is, blowing up in their pulpits and resigning at the rate of about one a week. They see that the church has, in the moral life of the community, only a veto power. It can no longer enact, nor enforce. As with the doctor, we have made the minister a tradesman. We hire the doctor to save our bodies by a particular method of homeopathy, allopathy, osteopathy. We hire the minister to save our souls on the same principle. The doctors have discovered that the way to eradicate disease is not to cure but to prevent it. The ministers have begun to take the hint from medicine. They begin to sus-

pect that the way to conquer sin and suffering is not to wash souls for the next world, but to provide tubs for the taking of a daily bath in this. Yet when our tradesman-minister tries to substitute sin-prevention for the sin-cure which was fashionable at the end of the 19th century, we quite naturally complain that this is not the article we bargained for, and buy our wares of another tradesman who keeps the kind we use. The formula for this transaction is: "Stick to the gospel and let business alone." The pinch is that the extra bathtubs for souls in this world would have to be paid for out of the dividend checks of the congregation. In Elmport, you recall, it was the church people who defeated the housing ordinance. Besides, a congregation, well knowing that a business operated on strictly Christian principles would, as things are, last about fifteen minutes, so resents the exposure of this connived-at imposture that a minister courageous

enough to proclaim practical Christianity does so fully realizing that the consequence may be dismissal. The one thing middle-class Christians most resent is Christianity.

Poor-Relation Colleges

Nor need you expect the thunder storm to be predicted by your colleges. To expect them to assume a moral leadership which would instantly pitch them into conflict with the rich testator whose favor they are obliged to woo is to expect fire to be wet. For them to plan on building them more stately mansions—dormitories, chapels, lecture halls—after attacking the methods whereby their prospective donors accumulated the funds would be to suppose a testatorial magnanimity which the history of will-making does not bear out. For one thing, democracy has broken down inside their very gates. In spite of nervous and fervid protestations to the contrary, class lines have formed and class

antagonisms have burst into flame among their own students. For another, it is shrewd comment that the radical clubs in the colleges were started not by the faculty, but by the students; which is to say, not by the employees of these knowledge factories, but by their customers, who created a demand for goods which had not been on sale. Within the year, the professors of political economy have taken steps to protect their freedom of speech—the first academic trade union. Waste no reproaches on the presidents and faculties for having betrayed a stewardship. No more than you or I can they afford to quarrel with their bread-and-butter.

The Soft-Pedal Press

The greatest engine of all is the sorriest out of gear. It is not so much that the newspapers are edited from their business offices: it is not so much that they are directly edited by their advertisers. They are edited out of the

timidities and prejudices of you, their middle-class readers. If your paper ventured to tell you the somewhat obvious truths that for any able-bodied man or woman to live without working is a crime against society more grave than most of the offenses which your judges punish by shutting up society-maimed unfortunates in unspeakable hell-holes; that every penny of wealth is created by the community and rightly belongs to it; and that to take interest for money is, probably, wrong, you would stop a paper which printed such seditious blasphemies and buy one which told you what you wished to hear. A newspaper owner is an ordinary mortal counseled by the peculiarly public nature of his business to be extraordinarily cautious. It is easy for him to keep friendly with his advertisers because, by an unspoken but cordial understanding which exists between them, both know quite well that their bread is buttered on the same side. The reporters are overworked, under-

paid, and too blasé with the external excitements of their trade ever to have asked themselves what it all means, even if they had the wit to guess. The prophet Isaiah might speak to them with the tongues of men and of angels and the morning papers would record that "the prophet Isaiah also spoke."

Those editors who do guess what it all means are so embittered by the quantities of political and commercial scandal which they know ought to be printed and will not be, that disillusionment and cynicism have put them into moral bankruptcy . . . I speak of those who have the intelligence to realize the degradation of their moral and mental prostitution. The others are not even aware of the fundamental fallacy: that whereas we assume the newspaper—this tremendous engine of public thought—to be a public institution operated in the public interest, it is privately owned and operated for private profit. When the interests of the public clash with the

interests of the owners, as they do hundreds of times a day, to suppose that the proprietors will espouse the public cause to the detriment of their own is to suppose that they will behave differently from all the other tradesmen into whose class we have thrust them.

The only two parties who know that the newspapers are not to be trusted are the radicals who maintain a none-too-trustworthy press of their own, and a small group of financiers who pay a statistician a high price for a weekly news-service on the understanding that they alone are to have the advantage of acting on the confidential information which it contains. Naturally, both these news-services, the radical press and the confidential letters, contain the same material—what is left out of the daily papers. You have yourselves to thank. Your editors, as tradesmen, do not keep goods for which they see no demand. They see no demand for news of the rumblings of industrial revolu-

tion; therefore it is not for sale. Yet it is not quite so innocent as that. The remark of the journalist in Ibsen's "Rosmersholm" pretty well formulates the science of American journalism:

> "I shall omit nothing that the public need know."

It is not that the press is a liar, though of course it is. The editor does not print it because you readers do not want it: you readers do not want it because the editor does not print it. The colleges do not teach it because educated people do not demand it: educated people do not demand it because colleges have never taught them its importance. The clergymen do not preach it because their polite congregations dislike having their sensibilities harrowed . . . the wheel comes full circle. And so the vicious spiral winds snake-like, poisoning our free institutions with this vast, unofficial censorship, infinitely more effective than any official censorship—the

universal and truth-killing gospel of Hush!

From all of which this much is certain: *You are not getting the news.*

And justice requires that your excuse be added: you are not getting the news because you are not sufficiently aroused to demand it; and you are not sufficiently aroused to demand it because you are not getting the news.

White (Collar) Slaves

Even if your schools and colleges could afford to be honest tradesmen, the wares they are selling are speedily becoming not worth your purchase. They belong to a time when education was for the few—the squire's son, the minister's son, the doctor's son, and chiefly as an ornament to these. Their professional training was, and still is, a separate affair. The only leading profession of that day which the colleges fitted their graduates to enter directly was teaching. For the others, it was, at its least, an

amenity; at its most, a mental discipline. Until competition and specialization began to hook-up business to a higher gear, this general training served well enough for the others, the large group of miscellaneous youth. And the reason was simple. Most of us,—farmers, mechanics, fishermen, pioneers,—did an honest day's work and puzzled our heads little over books. Educated men, being few, had a virgin market in which their disciplined brains would fetch a high price. Thus the news went round that higher education meant good pay, and then came that furore for education, when one's children must be educated at any cost: and what a piteous price of parental sacrifices for what a paltry return in education! It was now not only the squire's son and the doctor's son who went to college, but the butcher's, the baker's, the candle-stick-maker's; and, although in response to the increased specialization of business, the technical schools had sprung up, so general was

this stampede to learning that not only were the professional schools and the technical schools quickly overcrowded, but, since four years' expenses were as heavy a tax as most parents could bear, the academic college courses were more overcrowded still.

This spoilt the market. Disciplined brains would no longer command the high price they did. And now we are confronted with the incongruity of the trades-union-protected plumber in greasy overalls getting better pay than the "professional" in a white collar whose training involved an outlay of $5,000. Your mere college graduate, untrained to any profession is even more at the mercy of the employer. Yet your middle class goes on bowing down to its impotent wooden idol of education, never suspecting that the white collar which it confers as a sham badge of gentility may also be a genuine badge of life servitude. You have not heard the news:—that the money is no longer in

the white collar job; it is in the greasy overalls job. So, while the skilled artisan has a commodity always in demand, and one for which his union will enable him to exact a pretty good price, you are still pathetically forcing your sons' necks into this yoke of respectability.

Whole Duty of Respectables

And what is this respectability for which you have always been such sticklers?

A hasty review of his personal acquaintance will satisfy any candid person that it is quite possible for a man to lie, cheat, steal, slander and commit wholesale industrial murder, provided he does so respectably. This does not mean that he must not get caught. It means merely that he must not compromise himself legally. Between the known adulterer who gets into jail, and the known adulterer who keeps out, a great gulf is fixed. That gulf is respectability. Respectability is the act of

keeping friendly with the police. This false god might be forgiven the offense of putting crime on a genteel footing if it had not also put all the mighty passions of generous enthusiasm under the social taboo of "bad taste." Mrs. Pankhurst, of whom a modern poet has sung:

"And Jesus Christ has come again with whips,"

you respectables consider a wicked notoriety-seeker whose financial transactions, you would like to suspect, would not bear scrutiny. Tolstoy, if you knew more of him than that you have been told that he wrote indecent stories, you would consider a crank who made himself and everybody around him uncomfortable over the wrongs of the poor when he had enough for himself. In short, a reformer (which is to say, a Christian) is a dangerous person who upsets families —the tranquillity of your own being the supremest social millennium your Churchianity can imagine.

Picture to yourselves the disgust of an educated Roman citizen of the Year of Our Lord 75 at this slave-rabble sect called "Christians," followers of a mad Jewish fanatic whom the provincial authorities in Judea were obliged to execute, along with a brace of thieves, because he would not desist from stirring up the people. "His doctrines would undermine society. . . . They defy the civil authorities and the military. They blaspheme religion." Quite true. But these quotations are not from our Ciceronian Roman: they are taken out of your own mouths, and not a word in your whole vocabulary of abuse for socialists, syndicalists, anarchists and other Christians but will fit the tongue of that cultured Roman respectable, outraged by the preposterous beliefs of those earlier Christians. The doctrines they professed were doubly extravagant: that the slave was the equal of his emperor; that an enemy was not to be hated but to be loved,—notions

too absurd for the consideration of a sane man. And, I may add, notions which have been entirely discredited for nineteen hundred years.

So much for your respectability. What sharp bargain is this which the demon of property has driven with you? Have you bartered your immortal souls for a house and lot?

Do not suppose these words spring from hatred of the rich. And do not make the blunder of hating the rich. Their measure of guilt is no greater and no less than yours or mine. Lift not your hands to them for help, nor in hatred, for they as impotently move as you or I. Hate the system which made them rich to their poverty, and help them to make an end of it.

He That Loseth His Life

You have one refuge: to cast in your lot with the under-dog. Unless you accept the leadership, it will pass from

you, as it has done before, to another class who are the idealists. Their need has made them so. They stretch hands to you for help.

Make no mistake about this. You will have to think hard and think twice. All your traditions, all your teaching, all your ambitions have bidden you aspire to the estate just above you. The only refuge from capitalism which the capitalist has offered you is to become a capitalist. The prize which has been dangled just beyond your fists is the contemptible existence of living without working. You have always been taught that once you had scrambled through the doorway to the employing and owning class, you would be safe. You have seen that doorway contract. You have seen it grow harder and harder for your sons to fight their way in. You have seen the sons of those already in thrust out. You have seen the struggle turn murderous.

They are still telling you that your

only refuge from the mire of poverty lies in getting in. Does it ever occur to you that your only hope lies in exactly the opposite direction—in keeping out, in persuading others to keep out, and in joining forces with the plundered and the outcast? Does it occur to you that if your pity drew you to take sides with the oppressed, your unlooked-for reward would be a sudden and overwhelming power to end oppression? Does it occur to you that, once you joined forces with the poor (who, you have been told, cannot help you) together you would suddenly be invincible, and need no longer dread each other, nor the rich—nor poverty?

Penalized Marriage

Brusquely as you are being elbowed out of business, you are being elbowed more brusquely still out of your very existence. I speak now not of possible revolution, but of probable extinction. The most deadly process of extermina-

tion known to history is decimating your numbers—the voluntary restriction of birthrate under economic pressure. It is no mere coincidence that the only classes which maintain their normal birthrate are those ignorant of the means and of the economic advantages of reducing the fruitfulness of marriage, and those directly under the intimidation of the Roman priesthood which combats this practice through the powerful instrument of the confessional. But that, too, will fail in the end, because this is not a moral question. It is a bread-and-butter question. In families such as those of farmers or fishermen, sure of a living so long as they are willing to work for it, the children are welcomed in swarms. Normally, men and women no more think of getting married without having children than of having children without getting married. It is when each new little mouth must be fed

with what is taken away from the other little mouths that parents begin to doubt the blessing of parenthood.

Of the mighty passion, the poetic sentiment, the soaring aspirations, the ennobling idealisms, the enduring comradeships, the loyalties, firm and deep, which consecrate and dignify marriage, there is no need here to speak. Even if they had not been universally celebrated by religion, poetry, and the fine arts, such matters as these are what all earnest and thoughtful persons mean by marriage. Unfortunately, these are usually *all* they mean. If this were, indeed, the whole of it, critics of this social institution might save their ink to moisten their porridge. But marriage has contracted entangling alliances: with property; with considerations of board and lodging; with the dependence of the wife on her husband's salary, and thus on his keeping his job,—in short,

with the whole question of bread-and-butter. And those who persist in viewing the partnership of the sexes through that rose-mist of idealism which we are traditionally exhorted to regard as its one true light are scheduled to learn the color-blindness of that vision in a rude but convincing school.

In what follows, be it understood, marriage is examined at those points where it comes into contact with this bread-and-butter question. If its ideal pleasures are felt to outweigh any material penances, that is for lovers to vow and the priest to bless—though it may be well to consider, in the light of evidence about to be presented, whether such a choice may not later involve a moral surrender so great as to embitter and all but invalidate the moral value of the marriage relation. At all events, these material difficulties must be faced: if not before the ceremony, on the hither side of free choice; then after it, on the yon side of an often cruel necessity.

Shanghaied Crews

The aim of the middle-class mother is to get her daughter married as early as possible, and to keep her son unmarried as late as possible. Thus the same mother who is desperately angling for an eligible husband for her daughter will bitterly resent the same tactics when practiced on her son by the mother of some other marriageable daughter. Marriage, to the girl, is not only a refuge from sterile spinsterhood. It is a refuge from the necessity of earning her own living as well. To the boy, early marriage means an economic handicap so severe that so far from entertaining worldly ambitions thereafter, he can count himself lucky if he is able to make both ends meet without skimping. What is more, these young men are steadily growing more difficult to snare. They have begun to smell the stratagem. Society soaps the launching skids of courtship with every

oily smirk of encouragement. It has ransacked human ingenuity for devices to make marriage easy and attractive. But the instant the vessel has taken the plunge into the troubled sea of wedlock, this decent simper changes abruptly to a brutal taunt: it rounds on the wedded pair and says, "Now that you have let yourselves in for this, you can see it through yourselves. Expect no help from me.". . . And if you wonder at the twist of anxiety which knots the face of a young man in the first months after his marriage, you may be sure that his ears are being plagued by that cruel gibe. But this social treachery is, in the long run, its own undoing. The secret has leaked out, and the young men have heard it. Those of them cool-headed enough to escape the sex-intoxication which is practiced on them at every turn, by the theater, the dance, women's dress, and numberless devices of genteel privateering, are disgusted and disenchanted to the point of looking for some

higher goal in life than a middle class marriage baited chiefly with sexual appetite. Be assured of this: that once a young man has comprehended the gravity of his economic position, he is well-nigh shot-proof against the whole artillery of matron and maid until he can see three-meals-a-day-and-a-place-to-sleep for two, and this for a long while to come.

Partners Below Par

At his worst, this youth callously inquires why he should marry when he can enjoy at one and the same time the privileges of marriage and the liberty of bachelorhood: at his best, he shuts his jaw with a grim click and accepts that struggle for male chastity which society has only just begun to demand, and which the bait spread on every hand for the unmarried obliges him to conduct at overwhelming odds. On the other side, the women who have tasted the sweets of economic independence are not by

any means always so anxious for marriage as the complacent male likes to suppose, and when they are, they both can and do exact a higher standard of earning power and of unimpaired bodily health than their less independent sisters, for they are not *obliged* to choose. As this arrangement, by postponing marriage, increases the risk of venereal disease in at least one group of the men, and empowers, in the corresponding group of women, a rejection of damaged goods, the result is a still further restriction both of mates and of marriage.

The education which you have struggled so generously and so heroically to give your children, in order, as you said, that they might have a better chance than you had, has again postponed their marriage by selfish personal ambitions for a distinguished worldly career (one of the spurious wares dispensed in large quantities at our colleges); by fastidious tastes in books, furniture, pictures, sport and travel (tastes introduced into the

colleges by the sons of the rich) which to gratify will require of them half a lifetime of hard work at a moderate stipend. Barren ideals,—not alone in the sense of parenthood. Besides, as has been explained elsewhere, this education does not educate, and if it did, a crowded market is making it increasingly difficult to sell.

What Would the Neighbors Think!

Yet even when the colleges have not replaced domestic pleasures with intellectual pleasures (perhaps, after all, a shade wholesomely) the simplest middle class marriage is encumbered by quantities of commercial junk which your merchants have persuaded you must be bought not because you need it, or because you will ever use it, but equally because everybody else has bought it and because they have it to sell. You might vastly prefer to set up housekeeping in a tar-papered shack at the edge of town, and even immensely enjoy the zest of

roughing-it a bit, in the agreeable consciousness that you were saving money, but even if you could bring yourselves to swallow the patronizing pity of your neighbors at such supposed hardships, you could probably not afford to forfeit their "good opinion," even though your commercial position were such that you were not obliged to keep up appearances. That their good opinion should rest on a houseful of more or less atrocious furniture is a caustic comment on which I need not dwell.

But all this has evolved a type of middle class girl which the more judicious-minded youth is shy of marrying. Erroneously blaming her for the defects of the society which has made her what she is, he is, among his mates, frank to say that "she is not willing to begin where her mother began, but expects to begin where her mother left off." He doubts whether she understands home-making, or even cares to understand it. Her omnivorous appetite for pleasure cau-

tions him to suspect that she looks on marriage less as a contract in which she shall do her share of the work than as a perpetual holiday in which she can live without working. Finally, he has a strong suspicion that, from vanity or selfishness, she means to bear him as few children as she can, or none at all. Nor need it be denied that every one of the foregoing reproaches can be justly retorted on the young middle class male. With the self-punishing egoism of his years, he ignores the modest, womanly girl who would satisfy his every requirement for a good wife, for the girl who is shrewd enough, and often brazen enough, and sometimes unscrupulous enough to practice on his passions by every detail of her dress, if not of her conduct itself.

Reluctant Suitors

These are the things which hundreds of thousands of middle-class young men and women are saying to themselves and

to one another, and naturally they make the task of marrying-off daughters (who always outnumber the males in a static population) enormously difficult. Self-respecting parents, and self-respecting daughters, too, have been driven to shifts which they blush to think of to ensnare the less than willing male. Mothers who, with all their hearts, abhor the vulgar intimacies of the newer dances, have tolerated them and reluctantly accepted their grave moral risks on the chance of winning a possible husband for their daughters in that terpsichorean marriage market which was all but deserted by the men before the physical incitements of these modern steps fetched them back. Many a self-respecting girl has viewed these dances and the crude allurements of revealing dress with honest, healthy disgust, only to be brought to the conclusion that spinsterhood and childlessness were too high a price to pay for a self-respect which everybody around her inter-

preted as squeamishness. In both these cases, the maternal instinct of race-preservation is strongly at work. And what has created the whole predicament is economic pressure. Multitudes of young women, who neither need the money nor enjoy the work, obtain employment in offices for the sake of association with men who might be induced to marry them. This, of course, means that the bread-and-butter pinch has fastened on them indirectly by way of the young men who have been deterred by the bread-and-butter pinch from making them offers of marriage.

"My Duty to Society"

In a New England town dignified by revolutionary history and by the most august traditions of literature and philosophy to which the nation can appeal, a middle-class pair have made their nest. The cathedral nave of elms mottles their street with shadows of leafage and tatters of sunshine, dancing on lawn and

highway to a stirring breeze. The town green is bestrewn with the monuments of two great wars. The past of the nation is enshrined in this stately, venerable community.

And their affection has been enshrined, too, in the coziest of gambrel-roofed cottages, painted Indian red since the war of independence, and embowered among flowering shrubs. Into the low-ceiled rooms, which have been filled with the choicest mahoganies—escritoires, davenports, tea-tables, Sheraton chairs of aristocratic cut, settees of a distinguished flourish—the great trees outside shed a restful, greenish shade. It is June, month of nuptials. A little chuckling blaze of birch logs on the andirons tempers the spring chill . . . A pleasant place to linger over breakfast on radiant mornings of summer, birds twittering in the vines on the window lattice, breeze making silvery music with the leaves, sunbeams flickering on the floor through tossed

foliage . . . As pleasant, as snug, as elegant a room as one could wish to begin a new life in or grow old in. Moderation, thrift and good taste have decked it. Granted that this is the thing to do, then this is the way to do it. In the firm line of this young husband's mouth is written the stern record of his prenuptial clean-living. In the figure of his wife, a frank, hearty comrade, is the promise of the sacred end of all marriage.

And yet . . . and yet . . .

Here was an ideal middle class marriage, if such can be found; and its *morale* dated back to a time when a husband could, without challenge of his intelligence or his sincerity, announce: "I consider that in providing for a wife and children, I am fulfilling my duty to society." That this highly individual performance (not wholly innocent of the most elemental selfishness) has latterly been examined and found inadequate to save not only society but these

very wives and children themselves, is too shattering to self-esteem to be admitted even by such of these complacently indolent middle classers as have been privileged to hear the news. You can go on discharging that highly individual duty in the obstinate belief that it is all-sufficient; or in the selfish hope that you and yours will manage to escape the general overturn; but if you do, this torrent of economic change, which you are too inert to guide, will overwhelm you and yours in the end.

Paradise Were Wilderness Enow

You have your house and your pretty furniture. Well, what have you? Wood and brass; treasures of this world. You have your fireside, your wife and your babies. Well, what have you? The narrowing perspectives of domesticity in which heroic generosity is reduced to the vanishing point:—the selfish creature-comforts which breed indifference to all that really matters in

this world or in any other. Selfish love, selfish contentment, selfish ambition, selfish pleasures, selfish hopes: an egoism of two, foredoomed, in the absence of any super-domestic concern, to split into two egoisms of one.

Everything human divides into two groups: that which lives, and that which is dead. Death can destroy the soul without impairing the body. Your dead man walks the streets and goes through his accustomed motions, but the man himself died back there awhile when the soul of him surrendered.

Such was the grewsome secret of this middle class paradise of two. It was limbo—the fools' paradise of the Miltonic epic—it was dead, and dead were all who dwelt therein.

And all this when, not three miles away from these storied acres, roared and thundered an industrial inferno ripening for revolt. Two patient, clear-eyed, cool-headed people, a young man and woman it may be, thus consecrating

their wedded affection, might have started the social enginery of that neighboring mill-town to the bringing of at least a temporary order out of that ominous chaos. Two with the vision which might reasonably have been expected of the passion which had irradiated their lives: two, with a passion to share the abundance of joy which had been flooded over them, might have found, in service, a salvation in this world such as to reduce salvation in any other to an impertinence.

They could have tilled the garden of the Everlasting. It beckoned them in smoke-volleying chimneys.

And they preferred a garden of June roses.

This is death in life.

The Greatest Thing in the World

You ask me if this is a trait of middle class marriage in particular, or of so-called happy marriage in general. I reply, in desperation, that I do not know.

But on the chance of omnivorous egoism being characteristic of all marriage (at least as it is practiced in a society which encourages the head of each family to lavish on his wife and children all the loot he can legally filch from every other family) I mean to carry this whole question one plane higher—to ask whether, in the face of responsibilities so tremendous, and since the day is already lost on the issue of birthrate, the true idealists of the American middle class have any business marrying at all. This is to accept life on heroic terms. But the mouth of a prophet has already spoken it:

> The whole trend of capitalistic industrialism is toward emphasizing the relations of the individual to society to the neglect of the family unit . . . The Socialists are generally those who would be better off themselves and leave society better off, if they would frankly turn their

energies as individuals toward the welfare of the group as a whole and leave the propagation of the race to others who are in a better position for producing good offspring. The Socialist ideals, which are hopelessly above anything like the present condition of humanity, are not unthinkable as a working possibility for those who are willing to pay the price for them.

Let no one presume to imagine that I am such a simpleton as to propose that the business of replenishing the race be suspended until we can mend this social machinery. Despicable as it is as an ideal, as a fact it is indisputable that the formula of British statecraft is the history of most human advance: we "muddle through somehow." That main business of replenishing the race must and does go on for the very simple reason that Mother Nature has taken care to bludgeon us into doing her errands,

though if it is to go on prosperously, this other business of mending the social machinery must go on, too. The point is that, for the present, the two somewhat interfere, and while babies are by far the most important matter in life, it sometimes happens that there are other matters which must come first in order that babies may eventually resume their proper position at the head. A capitalist society which demands children but declines to accept any responsibility for their well-being once they are born; which proposes to take all it can and give as little as it may, quickly teaches parents, as it taught the French working people who restrict birthrate, that the parental love which will beget children into a life of such certain misery is not parental love, but parental appetite. The sheer instinctive humaneness of man scents the detestable fraud of this social bargain and resolves to thwart it at any cost. And all the cajoleries of the State and thunders of the Church

will not alter that determination until the conditions which created it are abolished.

Marriage as a Bribe to Silence

He who attacks society always risks his domestic security. The retaliation seeks his most vulnerable spot. In this struggle for industrial liberty the hostages given by parenthood to fortune are, if the parent undertakes radical leadership without economic independence, in hideous jeopardy. Such leaders should be told, in advance, exactly what they are letting themselves in for, in order that they may, if their heads can be "bloody but unbowed" in that season when the bludgeonings of Mother Nature fall hardest and heaviest, avoid giving those hostages unless they can bring themselves to be prepared to see their wives and children strung to slow tortures of the refinement of indirect persecution by poverty and privation. There are men (every age has had

them) with the fierce courage to accept this martyrdom—it is no less—for themselves, and with the steadfast idealism to impose it on their wives and children. There are others who, by grace of fortune or skill of strategy, have contrived to evade the penalties whilst still bearing an active part in the program of revolt. But for the rank and file of those to whom this message is addressed, those of generous sympathies and valorous enthusiasms, the union of radicalism and marriage is, unless radicalism is the Silent Woman of the partnership, little seen and less heard, certain to be a turbulent and ill-assorted match. And at the beginning of this part of the discussion it is only fair to say so plainly.

But the challenge has already reached the ears of those young men and young women whose consciences have responded to the call to service. It is a serious question with these whether they have any right to marry. They are confronted with the same vows of poverty,

celibacy and obedience which the great saints of the Middle Ages found themselves obliged to embrace in order to be able to serve their age. Marriage, which should be the crown of youth, is, as things are, a farewell to it. But the young radical knows a sorrier truth than this: that marriage, which should set a holy seal on his radical ideals and bless them with fruitage of the body as well as of the spirit, means either the forfeiture of his ideals or of his domestic security. Wives, being dependent on their husbands' earning-power, throw the whole weight of their influence against radicalism, and even when they do not, there are the children to consider. There is no alchemy like marriage for transmuting a valiant revolutionist into a docile domestic animal. Thus the whole weight of one-half the adult population, and all the weight of the responsibility for children is thrown against social reconstruction. Marriage is the bribe to silence tossed by

capitalism to the middle class. The triumphant leer on the face of an employer as he congratulates an employee on the addition of another baby to his household, says, in so many words: "Another shackle to your office desk!" Here and there an employer has had the injudicious brass to say that he is not paying salaries on the basis of his man's family responsibilities, but on the basis of his value to the business. While this would probably never be said by one who realized the social logic of such a remark, let alone the bald atrocity of the sound of the thing; it is, nevertheless, the prevalent policy of business, and one which, as you can see for yourselves, is penalizing marriage and draining the blood of your race into stock dividends.

Have a Ball and Chain

Men have their choice of renouncing individual happiness to contribute to the general. And a young radical is not slow in finding out that, once married,

the chances are that his radicalism must wear the gag. Unless he is economically independent—which generally means that he is living on the toil of others—society, in the person of his employer or his clientele, will punish him for his dissent. Not for his own sake must he abandon his ideals, but for the sake of those dearer to him (rightly or wrongly) than his ideals. Your middle class is honey-combed with mute, inglorious revolutionists who say: "I am with you heart and soul; but if I say anything I lose my job." An employer quickly and half instinctively differentiates in his attitude between the men in his hire who are married and must submit to his dictation and, let us say, two or three radicals who are unmarried and could, if discharged, snap their fingers under his nose. They are known to be radicals and yet they are not discharged, partly because the acute conscience and the alertness of mind which made them radicals have also made them valuable

employees, and partly because the employer knows that discharge holds no terrors for them. They admit in perfect candor that no red badge of courage is to be pinned on their lapels for such conduct. Their only difference from their more subservient fellows is that they have been wary enough to avoid incurring the ties by which society can penalize their radicalism. They are free to say that many a married man with a courage double their own will stifle his convictions and suffocate his conscience for the sake of his babies when, if he had nobody but himself to consider, he would never be happier than in a fight for a good cause. Is it strange, therefore, that a young man to whom ideals are the only reality in life, once he understands these terms, refuses to accept marriage at such a price? To the capitalist society which says: "You may have a wife and children on the understanding that you keep quiet about my crimes," he replies with cool con-

tempt, "You may keep the wife and children, and be damned to you!"

Marriage which can only be had by the impoverishment of moral surrender is not a bait to tempt that man with whom the thwarting of these social villanies transcends every personal consideration. Threatened with a "lonely old age," he replies that for him who has lived his life aright neither loneliness nor old age holds any terrors; and him who has not, neither family nor fortune can save from the consequences. He might add that the old age of those who surrender is not noticeably such a halcyon season as to tempt him to capitulate. Childlessness is, it is true, a heavy fine. But he can console himself that it is childlessness of the body only, and not childlessness of the spirit, as with many less fortunate married brothers.

Cure Guaranteed, or Money Refunded

You, in whose experience these items

check up with fact, are impatient to ask: "Agreed, heartily, that the time is out of joint: what do you propose to set it right?"

A fair question; and it shall have a candid answer; in fact, two candid answers.

Seventy years ago, when Thomas Carlyle, with those sad eyes of his, foresaw this modern industrial muddle, and thundered out that warning which we are now paying such heavy fines for having allowed to go unheeded, he was met with the same challenge:

> " 'You tell us the evil,' cry such persons, as if justly aggrieved, 'and do not tell us how it is to be cured!' "

His reply was to refer the questioners to Morrison's Pill, the Radway's Ready Relief of the eighteen-forties.

> "How is it to be cured? Brothers, I am sorry I have got no Morrison's

> Pill for curing the maladies of Society. · It were infinitely handier if we had a Morrison's Pill, Act of Parliament, or remedial measure, which men could swallow, one good time, and then go on in their old courses, cleared from all miseries and mischiefs! Unluckily, we have none such; unluckily the Heavens themselves, in their rich pharmacopœia, contain none such. There will no 'thing' be done that will cure you. There will a radical universal alteration of your regimen and way of life take place; there will a most agonizing divorce between you and your chimeras, luxuries and falsities take place . . ."

Was Carlyle too severe with us? The years have justified his sternness. Our society did not change its diet; did not purge itself. We have overeaten, over-indulged; under-exercised; misused our functions, and behold! we are back

again, worse off than ever, whining for the quack cure-all which, swallowing over night, we can wake up in trim to repeat our follies on the morrow. Just Nature knows no such transaction.

No. Mending these evils is a sterner business. Thought, patience, valiant struggle against ignorance, inertia and suspicion; endurance; suffering; sacrifice—these are the terms of purchase in a world where there are no bargain days at the counter of experience. A society doing penance for its sins and the sins of its fathers. No patent-medicine remedy, this. Not easy; but it must be done lest a worse thing befall.

The other reply is more hopeful. But if I decline to make it more definite, it is because I know all too well that to propose this or that program of radical reform is to incur lengthy quotations from that frog-chorus of stodgy conservatives who either flounder in misunderstandings of the actual proposals of such radical programs grotesque and

egregious enough to flunk a schoolboy, or who have the very best of reasons for desiring to prolong such misapprehensions in you.

Remedies exist. Some have even had their trials and proved workable. But in a time when their most flattering reception is the phrase "dangerously socialistic," it is probably better for all concerned that they should, when they do come, be joyfully acclaimed as rescuers rather than grudgingly admitted as suspicious characters.

Meanwhile, may I merely entreat you, good neighbors, to reflect that these fire alarms frantically sent in at the mention of socialism, syndicalism, or any other radical program so far proposed in the history of the world, may be sounded for brush fires of social refuse at one end of town to cover the operations of a professional arson squad at the other end?

May I ask you to reflect that these hoarse warnings about the break-up of the family (which is already being

broken up by the factory system) and the rest of it, may be voiced, consciously or unconsciously, by beneficiaries of the evils which these "dangerous revolutionaries" are preparing to abolish?

May I, in short, in answer to your perfectly reasonable, if somewhat elementary question, entreat you, with all the cordiality in the world, to be on your guard against your own mental indolence and your own credulity?

Brothers all, we are in this predicament together. The blame, personally considered, is neither here nor there. It is on us all alike. Call it capitalism, since that is the system under which, now as its pensioners, now as its victims, we all live. To denounce this or that capitalist, except as his acts typify the offenses of the system which forces him to commit them, is a volley wasted. He may be quite as much at the mercy of this evil scheme of things as the employee whom it forces him to victimize, though, suffering from it somewhat less,

he is somewhat less keen for a change. To assume the existence of an organized, contrived "System" (and I admit that things do sometimes wear that look) is just as idle a waste of powder and shot . . . and if I have, elsewhere in these pages, fallen into that tone, it is the pitfall of a figure of speech. We do not commit these social villanies from choice or even consciously: we merely clip coupons. We do these things because we must, or go under.

So, if there is an answer to your question, it must come not from me, but from yourselves. And it is coming—in a new generation of courageous youth.

The Failure of Success

It must be ten years since the magazines were bleating about high-salaried captains of industry. There is always room at the top. This was the shibboleth. How that unexampled physical phenomenon was to be achieved with all the underlings scrambling for the same

position was a riddle which they did not volunteer to explain. The all-important was to get there. External displacement. It was the time when your middle class was yawping about our "wonderful material prosperity"—for which the bills are just beginning to come in. You were swallowing quantities of what is now technically known as Success Dope. This assured you that if you were willing to spend your boyhood and youth dutifully sweeping out the office (and here occurred a dozen disqualifying phrases) you had more than an even chance of being, as a financier with a ruined digestion, supported for the rest of your days by the labor of your fellow men. That an army cannot consist entirely of brigadier generals was a minor discrepancy which a middle class discovered for itself by the same painful process and at about the same moment that the aforesaid bills began to come in. But the happy issue is that in the bright lexicon of guff there is now no such

word as Success. More gratifying still, about the time that our wonderful material prosperity began to turn sour on us, the Success Magazine failed. Also, the Shining Examples developed traits which failed to shine. They had trouble to stay perched on their pedestals. They wabbled. They pitched down to alliances with ladies of dubious antecedents; or they undertook to break the bank at Monte Carlo: or, more awkward still, they suffered from an epidemic of subpœnitis and fled from the federal authorities. And so these gilt-buttered men of high salaries gradually faded wanly out of our national Valhalla of young men's heroes.

Hearts Insurgent

And now the change. It has become not impossible to find young men—a few—of the most promising type (the type with the executive faculty which had, a few years earlier, been starting out with

the firm intention of becoming railway presidents, or, failing that, presidents of the United States at the very least) who are now voluntarily surrendering the best years of their lives to occupations which lead nowhere in a worldly sense, which are toilsome, obscure, amid squalid neighborhoods, and so poorly paid that even marriage is out of the question. Perhaps they see some work which needs doing, not likely to get done unless they do it. Perhaps they see an opportunity of obscure and ill-paid service which is nevertheless worth embracing for its own sake. At any rate, they are no longer hypnotized by the gold lettering of Men Who Have Succeeded, meaning Men Who Own a Steam Yacht.

Already some sense of the greatness of their errand has been borne to the minds of this small but goodly company. They are quite contemptuous of "prospects"; utterly dead to the appeal of what is pompously termed a career; and

very skeptical over the value to the world of a personal ambition. One of them was asked by a New York business man: "Why do you waste your time in a sailors' mission? There is no money in it." The reply he received from a youth who was not blind to the fallacy of a philanthropy which was handing back, in the form of a mission, a mere fraction of the money which, if it had been given them in the form of wages, might have made a sailors' mission unnecessary, was this: "Did it ever occur to you, sir, that there may be men who cannot afford to make money?" Another was asked: "Why do you waste the best years of your youth as a slum doctor? Why don't you do something for *yourself?*" "Because," was the cool reply, "I am not interested in myself, and I am interested in the prevention of poverty and disease. As for my youth, I figure that I have chosen the surest means of preserving it—though that was not my object."

The New Frontier

It is true that these are still only a handful. They are the new pioneers. They have had the vision and the insight to espy the new frontier at their own doors. The hardships of this new frontiering are as great and probably greater than the hardships of the old. Those broke with the civilization of their time and dared a savage wilderness. These must break with the civilization of their time and dare a civilized wilderness just as pitiless and just as savage. They will be considered zealots and fanatics by their own people, by their own friends, by their own families. They will learn, in the dark hour of misunderstanding, that, when Christ bade his followers forsake their families if need be to follow him, he meant exactly what he said. They must be prepared for poverty, for persecution, for a toilsome life and a neglected old age. And they must be prepared, if need be, to forego mar-

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riage. Small wonder, then, that this terrific array of conditions has narrowed this band to a picked company.

Your colleges, while they can hardly be expected to expose the financial eccentricities of their rich uncles (notoriously sensitive persons, and easily miffed) have, nevertheless, begun to pass the word along to their graduating classes. As yet, this has only progressed to the point of baccalaureate sermons urging the obligation of "service"; but the unanimity of this theme in last June's baccalaureates was so startling as to suggest that obstinate questionings had begun to vex even the soul of *præses* himself. Vague as "service" may sound in a baccalaureate sermon, trust these youngsters to make the prompt discovery that "service" involves an attack all along the line, beginning, it may be, with their own dear alma mater.

It is well for you that this is so. It will be still better for you when your colleges transfer this kind of teaching

from a once-a-year academic benediction to their thrice-a-week academic courses. Considering that they are riding on the backs of the working class as it is, this is about the least that could be expected of them. For unless you generate leaders, and this soon, your leadership will be usurped. The working class is already putting forth leaders by the divine election which dignifies a post of service with the badges of hardship and danger. Dungeons and stripes are their insignia of rank. Your own leaders must wear a nobler insignia than they wear now before they can hope to challenge such authority as that. Nor can you expect that the working-class leaders, created out of the sudden stress, will invariably be idealists like Giovannitti, Ettor and Elizabeth Flynn. There will be leaders of another sort who will deserve all the abuse which you have falsely and stupidly pelted at these three: nor will you have any trouble in perceiving the difference.

Working class or middle class, there will be those who will give up their lives to *live*. These leaders are coming to you as only true leaders can come—by the voluntary ordeal of a supreme personal sacrifice. By that holy sign you shall know them, and there shall be no mistaking the token. These are The Twelve: the great leaders who let wife and kindred go to become the great servants. These are they that have come out of great tribulation.

But they must have the encouragement of the great multitude of the obscure who are doing what they can—the Credit System—the many who would do what the few are doing if they might. Without the many, the few are nothing, can do nothing, can be nothing but voices crying in the wilderness. But between these two, the few and the many, the leaders and the multitude, miracles are wrought; mountains are removed. The few have let wife and kindred go that their children may be children of

the spirit. The many shall have children of the flesh. Flesh and spirit: both are holy. Who shall say which the more holy? Both must be.

You young men of to-day, you young women of to-day: hear this call for volunteers. If it were a war, you would respond as a matter of course. Well, it *is* a war; but a war of a new and glorious kind—a war not for taking but for giving life. The battlefield is not a meadow of carnage on foreign soil. It is a strife of living and working at your own thresholds, among your own people. In the country; in the small town; in the trim, city suburb; in the tenements of the mill district; in the stenched slum; in the professions; on the delivery wagon; in the lecture hall; at the ticket window; over the counter; from the soap box; at the office desk; in the locomotive cab; in the forecastle; at the pit mouth; in the legislative chamber; over the scrubbing brush; at the blackboard;

at the cradle . . . there is no one who may not bear a share. There will be those who can give up all, and verily I say unto you, they have their reward. There will be those who can give up a part, and verily I say unto you, they have their reward. There will be those who can give up nothing, and verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But there is no escape from the eternal challenge of this sacrifice except we surrender: and the reward of that surrender is liberty.

A new frontier calls you. The old frontier was a conquest of a material wilderness of forests and streams. The new frontier is a conquest of a social wilderness. The old frontier called for sinewy axmen and riflemen of indomitable courage. The new frontier calls for axmen who can hew to the line with as true an eye and as steady a hand as the axmen of old, but to a new sort of line. And it calls for riflemen of a dauntless moral courage. The men and

women who forsook comfort and security to carve paths through that transcontinental wilderness were nation-builders. That goal is passed. The men and women who forsake comfort and security to carve paths through the social wilderness will be world-builders. If the old frontier summoned that unconquerable pluck of the Anglo-Saxon to high adventure: to how much higher adventure does this new frontier summon the finest and deepest courage of your race? Glorious sires of the body you have had. Glorious sires of the spirit you may become.

Golden pour of summer sunshine over Elmport: church-bells booming their solemn noonday jubilation; sunlight and shadows of foliage flickering on the white walls of the ancient houses; blue-coated veterans marching with faces stern and set; "Lawrence Police" on the badges of the constabulary; and, over the empty, silent mill, flowing gallantly

to the noon breeze, in bitter mockery,—the national colors . . .

I had journeyed to Elmport to watch an old New England town celebrate its great national holiday of political liberty during a struggle for industrial liberty. I had seen the foreign immigrants eager, interested, and respectful (if a bit puzzled), watching the American middle-class protest against syndicalism.

That protest was a bit absurd. But there was in it a deeper pang, an ache of pathos which struck to the heart. It was so well meant. It was so utterly beside the point. A town piteously bewildered. It knew that a justice of the supreme court and a saintly bishop were stock-holders in the Elmport mill and that therefore the strikers must be in the wrong. The townspeople were saying to the I. W. W. *(which had accepted the leadership which they themselves had rejected):* "You challenge our institutions. We reply to your challenge by pointing to our flag,—the flag for which,

in tears and agony, we gave our young sons to death in battle half a century ago. Our eyes are full of angry tears, and our hearts are full of bitterness at your insult. For the future, affront this flag at your peril!"

Such was the reply of Elmport. Such is the reply of that old New England of which this little town of Elmport is but the magnifying lens. Such is the reply of the American middle class from ocean to ocean. It does not understand. It will not sympathize. It can only intensely resent.

And now let me tell you the answer of radicalism to the middle class.

It is in the basement of the Belgian hall in Lawrence. Overhead, a strike meeting is in progress. Except for its occasional thunders, down here all is order and quiet. At a long table, thirty children are eating their evening meal. They are saying nothing because most of them are too little to talk, and if they could, there are hardly any two of them

who could understand each other's tongues. Every morsel they are tucking into their tiny mouths is the gift of a family in some other New England mill city which has gone without in order to be able to send it.

A strike-leader, who had been haranguing the meeting overhead, came down stairs, flushed with denunciation. Something in the communal aspect of the table, some strange hush of sacramental quietude as these children sat in the deepening dusk eating the bread of sacrifice, brought a quick gush of tears to his eyelids. He turned away, murmuring, "Is this as near to the brotherhood of man as we can come?"

Dear friends, would it not be better to stop calling this radicalism? Would it not be better to call it the good news of that kind elder brother of us all, the carpenter of Nazareth? no!!

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